



# Statement of Significance

Pertaining to the: **War Memorial Tablets**  
 At: **All Hallows' Gospel Oak**  
 In the Diocese of: **London**

February 2020

This Statement of Significance has been prepared by HMDW Architects Ltd in collaboration with the PCC, and accompanies a Statement of Needs, both of which have been prepared as part of a Faculty application.

The purpose of the Statement of Significance is to explore the strengths and potential that the church holds for worship and mission, and to help those in the Faculty system advise the PCC and assess their plans for change.

In assessing significance, features are considered against the 'heritage values' set-out in *Conservation Principles* (English Heritage, 2008) and their level of contribution toward these values is evaluated as *high, moderate-high, moderate, low-moderate, or low*.

## 1. Brief history and description of the church building(s), contents, churchyard and setting

### Listing text:

Church. 1889-1901 by James Brooks; chancel and chapel of the Blessed Sacrament c1913 by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott. Ancaster stone with rusticated coursed rubble and freestone dressings. Slated roofs. French Gothic style.

PLAN: 5-bay nave with aisles same height as nave; 3-bay chancel with chapels opening off.

EXTERIOR: west end with round-arched double entrance; tympanum with central statue of the Good Shepherd and blind arcading. Above, a large wheel window; gable end with balustrade and 2-light traceried window. Central bay flanked by rectangular plan turrets with narrow lancets and string courses. Aisle walls and battered buttresses extend to each side of turrets. Aisles with heavy battered buttresses from foundations to roof and lancets windows in arched recesses. Chancel with paired lancets; polygonal stair turrets with pyramidal caps.

INTERIOR: nave arcades with tall, cylindrical pillars without capitals but carrying the beginnings of a vault which was never completed. Vaulted chancel; its north aisle 2-storeys, the south carried up without a floor. Finely detailed pavement, marble high altar. Image of the Virgin and the font also by Scott.

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Revisions:      Date:      Description:

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HISTORICAL NOTE: "This is certainly Brooks's best church and a most impressive example of the ambition of the later-nineteenth century church builders" Basil Clarke. (Survey of London: Vol. XXIV, King's Cross Neighbourhood (St Pancras part IV): London: -1952: 140; Clarke B: Parish Churches of London: -1966).

## 2. The significance of the church



The Grade II\* listing places the church amongst the best 5% of all Listed buildings. It is sited at the edge of a densely built up area along Savernake Road, running between South End Green and Gospel Oak. It is thought that its location here anticipated further building development on the Heath north of the Overground railway line, which would have placed it in a more central location within its parish. The heathland was protected in 1889.

The church stands on a relatively constrained site, there being no graveyard, and with only narrow strips of land on the south, east and west sides. The site slopes approximately one metre down from north to south, and 2 metres down from west to east.

The original 1952 Pevsner edition describes All Hallows as "One of the noblest churches of its date in England and no doubt Brook's masterpiece." John Betjeman, in his 1968 Collins Guide notes the "spacious interior, admirably suited to ceremony... cathedral-like effect created by massiveness, simplicity and proportion". Brooks was a leading church architect of the time, having designed a number of churches between 1856 and 1889. The earlier ones were high and decorated Gothic, such as St Margaret, Lee (1878). All Hallows was one of the last, displaying a plainer, more monumental style.

### The defining features of the church are:

- The massive battered buttresses flanking the triple-pitched roof, with no tower or spire, but square turrets aside the rose window at the west end and octagonal turrets at the east.
- The "hall" church interior, in which the aisle ceilings are the same height as the nave. The effect is compounded by the fact that the vaults were never constructed beyond the springing points, surviving as stubs at the top of the slender columns, and the entire ceiling is instead a horizontal rough boarded soffit set at what would have been the highest point of the vaulting.

- The large plain glass leaded light windows, coupled with the lack of other fittings such as screens, pews and artwork, and plain ashlar stone walls, make for a very light and airy interior, quite unlike many of its contemporaries.
- The monumental proportions appear to have been taken to heart by Giles Gilbert Scott in the handling of the east end, with an impressive spatial layering created by the double-stacked arches along the south transept echoed on each side of the chancel, and the broad marble tiled dais and high altar. The buff stone and simple wood block floor lend the interior a warmth and simplicity that complements the grand space.
- The interior is noted for very good acoustics and has been used for occasional large choral concerts for a number of years, and was recently used for the filming of some music-based television documentaries. The 4-manual Hill organ was installed in 1915.

There have been very few alterations since the pre-WW1 completion period:

- The part-undercroft at the east end was re-fitted with kitchen and toilet facilities in the 1970's.
- A columbarium has been installed in the rear of the high altar
- The heating was renewed with boilers in the south yard, using the original floor ducts for distribution and panel radiators around the column bases.
- An inner glass lobby was added to the north door in 2001, reducing draught from the 'everyday'-used door and enabling passers by to look into the building when it is locked.
- Recent installation of photovoltaic panels on the nave valley roof in connection with the feed in tariff.
- The addition of the South Court annexe in 2017/18.

The church is noted as a focal building in the Mansfield Conservation Area Appraisal document. The management strategy stresses "the area's high quality and unified architectural style and form".

## 2.1 Significance of the memorial

The war memorial was Listed Grade II (List Entry Number 1452850) in February 2018 for not only its association with the First World War and the quality of its execution, but also for its interest in being a rare example of a memorial erected before the end of the war. It is, therefore, of *high significance* for its aesthetic, historical, and communal value.

Further significance is attributed to the memorial due to its association with the architect Sir Giles Gilbert Scott who designed it.



## 3. Assessment of the impact of the proposals

Assessment of the impact of the proposals on the significance defined in Section 2

Proposal	Impact
Addition of memorial tablets to the west elevation.	<i>Moderate</i> impact due to the change of appearance, but mitigated by the stone tables being of a similar colour to the stone façade, and discreet stainless-steel fixings.
Fixing of the memorial tablets to the west elevation.	<i>Moderate-Low</i> impact due to fixing to the historic fabric, but mitigated due to use of stainless steel fixings into mortar joints rather than the stones. By fixing the tablets to the church building it also avoids potential harm to the memorial.

Sources: List Entries from the National Heritage List for England.  
'The Dedication of the Calvary: Holy Saturday, 1918' in All Hallows' Parish Record